

Elk Fire Update

Monday, October 21, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.



Rocky Mountain Complex Incident Management Team 1

Dan Dallas, Incident Commander



Information Phone: 307-303-7642

Hours: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Email: 2024.Elk@firenet.gov

InciWeb: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/wybhf-elk-fire-2024>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bighornnf>

Information Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/2024ElkFire>

Special Notes: Evacuations and closures will continue to evolve on the Elk Fire as additional progress is made. Please continue checking the evacuation and closure links below for current information.

As the weather warms back up, pockets of smoke will become visible inside the fire area. Fire managers are aware of these hotspots and will take action as needed. Most of the heat will likely come from the heavy down and dead fuels on the ground, which should not be a cause for alarm.

Driving is one of the biggest safety hazards during wildfires. The public is reminded that there is a lot of firefighter traffic on local roads and highways. Please drive with caution.

Current Situation: Remnants of snow remain in some of the shaded areas and northern facing slopes; however, a gradual drying pattern continues. Fire personnel were busy yesterday doing prep work to make potential firelines more defensible and repairing previous suppression lines.

Division A: Firefighters will continue to mop up and rehab firelines on the northern part of the fire.

Division Z: Crews are looking for opportunities to close any fireline gaps in the Red Canyon area. A road grader worked yesterday on suppression repair of dozer lines.

Divisions Z, P, M, K: Yesterday was a scouting day to identify a suppression repair opportunities. Heavy equipment that arrived on site will begin repair work today. A drone, or UAS, was used in Division K for an infrared flight to identify hotspots.

Divisions I: The ground dried out sufficiently to begin suppression repair work yesterday. While doing this work in the interior of the fire, a couple of logs flared up as they were turned over by the dozer. Crews promptly suppressed the hotspot. Suppression repair continued along the eastern edge of the fire.

Division H: Crews are focusing on the 26, or Red Grade Road, prepping it to use as an indirect fireline, to its junction with the 16 Road. They will prep that road to its junction with Highway 14. This work includes removing brush and other fuels by limbing trees and removing understory vegetation to eliminate small ladder fuels. This will assist with defending firelines in the event fire activity increases.

Divisions D, F: Fire supervisors are assessing the road system for a potential indirect fireline north of Burgess Junction to protect the WY DOT compound and the Forest Service Visitor Center and Work Center. A structure protection plan is in place. Work continues to prep the 15 Road north to Division A, limbing trees and removing small ladder fuels. Backhauling pumps will continue as needed.

Weather, Fuels, and Fire Behavior:

Today will be very similar to yesterday, with subtle changes. Winds will be no more than 15 m.p.h. Minimum relative humidity will be 30-40%, with high temperatures in the lower 60s at upper elevations. This evening, pre-frontal winds will increase out of the southwest, picking up after 7 p.m. Localized gusts can be expected up to 35 m.p.h. The front is expected to come through overnight with potential gusts at lower elevations from 25-30 mph. Precipitation is not expected, but temperatures and humidity should moderate.

An infrared flight last night showed that most of the snow is gone. Fuel moisture in light fuels (grasses and branches) is starting to decrease. More smoke may be noticeable as fuels dry out.

Evacuations:

For information on Johnson County evacuations, go to Johnson County Emergency Management's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/JohnsonCoWYEMC> . For info on Sheridan County evacuations and road closures, go to the Sheridan County Emergency Management website: www.tinyurl.com/2s38bcc5 . You can also call the Sheridan County Sheriff's Office (307-672-3455) or Sheridan County Emergency Management (307-752-2174).

Closures:

I-90 from the Montana border to Sheridan will be closed today for a weed spraying via helicopter. Detour routes will be available. US Highway 14 is closed between Burgess Junction and Dayton. View the Wyoming Department of Transportation road-closure map here: <https://www.wyoroad.info/> . Bighorn National Forest closure Order No. 02-02-06-24-08 is in effect. The order and map can be viewed here: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/bighorn/alerts-notice> .

Elk Fire Statistics:

Size: 96,244 acres | Containment: 48% | Total Personnel: 549 | Location: West of Sheridan, WY
Reported: September 27, 2024 | Cause: lightning